

Biblical Studies Program
Overview of Old Testament History
August 2012
Lesson Two

I. **The Patriarchal Period** (ca. 2100 to 1800 B.C.) – Genesis 11:27-50:26

A. **Abraham** (2166 to 1991 B.C.) – Genesis 11:26 to 25:8

1. Abram lived with his father, Terah, and grandfather, Nahor, in the city of Ur of the Chaldeans, prior to the family's migration to Haran, in northern Syria

Genesis 12:1-3 – “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

2. It is assumed that the divine command given to Abram, recorded in Genesis 12, was preceded by a divine self-disclosure so plain and forcefully impressed upon Abram that he immediately forsook his old religion and embraced the living God
3. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed Haran (Gen 12:4)
 - a. His nephew Lot accompanied him, along with Sarai, Abram's wife, along with the possessions and persons they had acquired in Haran
 - b. Abram journeyed into the land of Canaan, spent time in Egypt (Hagar acquired), came back into the region east of Bethel, separated from Lot, and eventually moved to the oaks of Mamre, in Hebron
4. The promise to Abram of a son and of his inheritance of the land are continued and elaborated in chapters 15 to 18:19
 - a. Gen 12:1-3,7
 - b. Gen 13:14-17
 - c. Gen 15:1,5,7,13-16,18
 - d. Gen 17:1-8,16,19,21
 - e. Gen 18:10,14,18-19
5. While at Mamre, Abraham (Abram is given a new name at the institution of the covenant of circumcision – “exalted father” to “father of a multitude”) received the three angelic visitors, who promise the birth of Isaac by the next year

Gen 18:10 – *“The Lord said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.’”*

- a. Two angels departed for Sodom, and Abraham stood before the Lord and “bargained” for the cities for Lot’s sake
 - b. God destroyed the cities of the valley, leaving them charred ruins which defy location to this very day
 - c. The angels assist Lot and his family to escape; however, his wife disobeys the angel’s command and became a pillar of salt (cf. Luke 17:32)
 - d. Having been made drunk by his daughters, Lot committed incest with each of his two daughters and they each bore him a son:
 - (1) Moab (“from father”) - the Moabites
 - (2) Ben-ammi (“son of my people”) - the Ammonites
6. After this time, Abraham journeyed toward the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur, for a while staying in Gerar
 7. Birth of Isaac (ca. 2066 B.C.)

Gen 21:1-7 – *“The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised. (2) And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. (3) Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. (4) And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. (5) Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. (6) And Sarah said, ‘God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.’ (7) And she said, ‘Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.’”*

- a. Hagar and Ishmael (who was born in 2080 B.C.) sent away
 - b. Ishmael became the father of the Arab peoples
8. The offering of Isaac

Gen 22:1-3 – *“After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here am I.’ (2) He said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’ (3) So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac.”*

- a. Abraham traveled to the region of Mount Moriah, just north of the city of Salem – that is, Jerusalem (Gen 22:2)

Gen 22:9-12 – *“When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built*

the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. (10) Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. (11) But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here am I.' (12) He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'"

- b. Having past the most severe test of faith, Abraham was comforted by God with the promise that all the blessings of the Covenant would most assuredly be his (Gen 22:16-18)
- c. He then returned with Isaac to the region of Beersheba
- 9. At the death of Sarah in Kiriath-arba (Hebron), Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah in Hebron, from Ephron the Hittite, as a burial plot for Sarah
- 10. Abraham commissioned his servant to return to Mesopotamia to find a bride for his son Isaac (Gen 24)
 - a. The servant arrived at Nahor and chose the beautiful Rebekah, who was Isaac's second cousin
 - b. She was the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother
- 11. The final years of Abraham are recorded in Genesis 25
 - a. Abraham took another wife Keturah, who also bore him a family including Midian, who was the father of the Midianite tribes (Jethro, the priest of Midian later became the father-in-law of Moses)
 - b. At the age of 175, Abraham died and was buried by his sons Ishmael and Isaac in the cave of Machpelah with his wife Sarah
- B. **Isaac** (2066 to 1886 B.C.) – Genesis 25:9 to 27:46
 - 1. Isaac ("laughter") is important link in the chain and is honored in parallel with Abraham and Jacob

Gen 26:3-5 – "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. (4) I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, (5) because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

- 2. After twenty years of barrenness, Rebekah conceived and gave birth to twin boys, Esau and Jacob
- 3. There was much competition and contention between Esau and Jacob, resulting in Esau's subordination to Jacob

- a. Esau sold his birthright (inheritance rights as the eldest son)
 - Esau bitterly regretted it that act (see Heb 12:16-17)
- b. Jacob also deceived Isaac and received the parental blessing normally given to the eldest son – the covenant blessing of Abraham, of which Isaac had become the custodian

Gen 27:28-29

*“May God give you of the dew of heaven
and of the fatness of the earth
and plenty of grain and wine.
(29) Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you,
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”*

- c. Esau also asked for a blessing from his father

Gen 27:38-40

“Esau said to his father, ‘Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.’ And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. (39) Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

*‘Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,
and away from the dew of heaven on high.
(40) By your sword you shall live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you grow restless
you shall break his yoke from your neck.’”*

- C. **Jacob** (2006 to 1859 B.C.) – Genesis 28:1 to 38:30
 - 1. Jacob journeyed to Haran (where he stayed for twenty years)
 - 2. Jacob married Laban’s two daughters, Leah and Rachel
 - 3. During this period, children were born to Jacob:
 - a. Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah
 - b. Rachel’s servant, Bilhah: Dan, Naphtali
 - c. Leah’s servant, Zilpah: Gad, Asher
 - d. Rachel: Joseph

Gen 31:2-3 – “...Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as before. (3) Then the Lord said to Jacob, ‘Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.’”

4. Jacob left Laban and returned to Canaan
 - a. Esau learned of Jacob’s return and comes to meet him
 - b. Prior to meeting Esau, while in the region of Penuel and Mahanaim near the fords of Jabbok, Jacob (now 97 years old) wrestled with God and received the name “Israel”
5. Jacob makes peace with Esau and continues on to Shechem (Esau returned to Mount Seir, south of the Dead Sea)
 - a. After the treachery of his sons, Simeon and Levi, against the men of Shechem, following the rape of Dinah, Jacob moved to Bethel and from Bethel to Ephrath (Bethlehem)
 - b. While in Bethlehem, Rachel died giving birth to her second son, Benjamin
 - c. Jacob continued with his family to the region of Hebron

D. **Joseph** (1915 to 1805) – Gen 37:1 to 50:26

1. Joseph is presented as the most noble of Jacob’s sons
2. Through a series of providential events, Joseph is able to save Jacob and his entire family from famine
 - a. Once in Egypt, Pharaoh assigned the entire family of Jacob a home in Goshen, a fertile and well-watered land, where they would remain a separate, distinct people
 - b. Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt (buried in Hebron)
 - c. Prior to his death, Jacob (Israel) assembled his sons to prophesy over them and to bless them (Genesis 49)

Gen 49:28,33 – “All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him...When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.”

3. Joseph and his brothers continued in Goshen (Egypt) after the death of their father Jacob (Israel)

Gen 50:24-25 – “And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’ (25) Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, ‘God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.’”

4. Joseph died at the age of 110, fifty-four years after Jacob

- a. His body was also embalmed but remained in Egypt until the Exodus
 - b. During the Exodus, the people of Israel took it along for final burial in Canaan [at Shechem] (Ex 13:19; Josh 24:32)
5. The patriarchal period closes with the death of Joseph (1805 B.C.)

II. **Egyptian and Exodus Period** (ca. 1800 to 1406 B.C.) – Exodus thru Deuteronomy

A. The Formative Period in Egypt

- 1. While in Egypt, the descendants of Jacob grew to a size that could class them as a nation
 - a. The rapid growth of the nation was the result of God’s blessing
 - b. The population needed to develop into a full-fledged nation for the time of their return to Canaan
 - (1) Ex 1:7 - *“But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, became exceedingly mighty, that the land was filled with them”*
 - (2) Ex 1:20 - *“...and the people multiplied and became very mighty”*
- 2. The sojourn in Egypt lasted from 1876 B.C. (the time Jacob arrived in the land, after Joseph brought his family [70 persons] to Egypt) to 1446 B.C. – 430 years (see Ex 12:40-41; Gal 3:17)

B. The Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings (Exodus through Deuteronomy)

- 1. The Exodus is the most significant historical and theological event of the Old Testament – it marks God’s mightiest act in behalf of His people
- 2. Moses (1526 to 1406 B.C.) – born to Levites

Ex 2:1-7,10 – *“Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. (2) The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. (3) When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. (4) And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. (5) Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. (6) When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children’ ...She named him Moses, ‘Because,’ she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’”*

- a. Moses was raised by Pharaoh’s daughter

Ex 2:11 – *“One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens...”*

- b. At the age of forty, Moses fled Egypt
- c. He lived for forty years in the land of Midian
- d. At the age of eighty, while tending his father-in-law’s flock in the region of Horeb, Moses encountered God in the burning bush

Ex 3:4-6 – *“God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ (5) Then he said, ‘Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ (6) And he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’”*

Ex 3:7-8, 10 – *“Then the Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, (8) and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians...Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’”*

- 3. The deliverance of the people of Israel
 - a. The ten plagues (Exodus 7-11)
 - b. The Passover (Exodus 12)

Ex 12:21-24 – *“Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. (22) Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. (23) For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. (24) You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever.’”*

- c. The crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)

Ex 14:21-22 – *“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. (22) And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”*

- 4. The journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai took three months (Ex 19:1)
 - a. The Mosaic Covenant is established (Ex 19-24)

Ex 19:4-6 – *“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. (5) Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; (6) and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

- b. The Tabernacle and institution of the priesthood (sacrificial system)

Lev 17:11 – *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”*

- c. All of this prefigures the atoning work of Jesus Christ
- 5. The people refused to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 13-14)
- 6. They remained in the region of the wilderness of Zin for thirty-eight years
- 7. In the fortieth year after their exodus from Egypt, Moses and the new generation of the sons of Israel resumed their march to Canaan
 - a. They defeat Sihon King of Heshbon and Og King of Bashan, taking control of their lands east of the Jordan River
 - b. The people arrived on the east side of the Jordan River and encamped on the Plains of Moab
- 8. Moses addressed the people for the last time (Deuteronomy)
 - a. At the age of 120 years, Moses died and was buried by God
 - b. Deut 34:10 – *“And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face...”*

III. **The Conquest** (of Canaan) **Period** (ca. 1406 to 1367 B.C.) – Joshua thru Judges 3:8

- A. The nation had a king (God Himself) and a constitution (the covenant)... what they lacked was a land to give their nationhood objectivity and stability
- B. Joshua led the nation in conquering the land of Canaan
- C. Deut 9:4 – *“...it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you.”*
- D. The miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (Joshua 3)
- E. The fall of Jericho (Joshua 6)
 - 1. Initial spying out the land

Josh 2:1-4 – *“And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly...as spies, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’ And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. (2) And it was told to the*

king of Jericho, 'Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.' (3) Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, 'Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.' (4) But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them."

Josh 2:11-13, 18, 21 – "[Rahab said] '...for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. (12) Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign (13) that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death'...[and the spies answered] 'Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household'...and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window."

2. The fall of Jericho

Josh 6:2-6 – "And the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. (3) You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. (4) Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. (5) And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.'"

Josh 6:15-17, 20, 23 – "On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. (16) And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. (17) And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent'...As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city...and the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her."

- F. The Gibeonite deception (Joshua 9) – as a result, five Amorite kings declare war on the Gibeonites...who then appeal to Israel
- G. The Israelites respond, launching their conquest campaign
 1. First, a series of southern campaigns; then a series of northern campaigns, lasting a total of seven years
 2. Joshua 12 lists thirty-one kings defeated by Israel
 3. Three cities completely destroyed with fire – Jericho, Ai, Hazor

Josh 24:13 – *“I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.”*

- H. The tribal allotments – the land divided among the tribes

Josh 24:14-15 – *“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. (15) And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

- IV. **The Period of the Judges** (ca. 1360 to 1051 B.C.) – Judges 3:10 thru 1 Samuel 10:1
 - A. Judgment upon Israel for her failure to drive out the nations (Judg 2:1-5)
 - B. The period of the Judges spans from Othniel (ca. 1360 B.C.), the nephew of Caleb of Judah, to the anointing of Saul (the first king of Israel) by Samuel
 - C. There is some overlapping of events and judgeships
 - D. Fifteen judges are presented, among the most known:
 1. Deborah (Barak is highlighted in Hebrews)
 2. Gideon
 3. Jephthah
 4. Samson
 5. Samuel
 - E. Although judges provided leadership for the people at various times, it was a period of lawless – *“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”* (Judg 21:25)
- V. **The United Monarchy** (ca. 1050 to 931 B.C.) – 1 Samuel 10:1 thru 1 Kings 12:15
 - A. King Saul (1051 to 1011 B.C.)
 1. Of the tribe of Benjamin
 2. Saul’s entire reign was spent at war with the nations surrounding Israel
 3. No change in the internal structure of Israel
 4. The kingdom was taken from him because of his disobedience

1 Sam 15:26-28 - *"For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel." (27) As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. (28) And Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day...'"*

B. King David

1. Anointed by Samuel (1 Sam 16), David spent the latter years of Saul's reign being pursued by the king and eventually took refuge among the Philistines
2. Following Saul's death, David was anointed king over the tribe of Judah at Hebron (ca. 1011 to 1004 B.C.)
3. After seven years, David became king over all of Israel (1004 to 971 B.C.)
4. David sought to build a "house" for God

2 Sam 7:11-14, 17 - *"...the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. (12) When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (14) I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son....(17) And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."*

5. David made Jerusalem the religious as well as the political capital of the kingdom - establishing a permanent place for the ark and for the priesthood
6. David unified Israel and gained victory over all her foes
7. David is listed as the most common author of the Psalms
 - a. His name appears in seventy-three titles
 - b. The New Testament adds two more
 - (1) In Acts 4:25, for Psalm 2
 - (2) In Hebrews 4:7, for Psalm 95

C. King Solomon (971 to 931 B.C.)

1. Solomon moved to remove all challenges to his authority and firmly established the kingdom he inherited from his father David (1 Kings 2:46)
2. Solomon was a gifted administrator and builder
3. Solomon was able to develop the full potential of the kingdom he inherited - time of great material prosperity
4. See 1 Kings 4:20-34
5. Temple built in Jerusalem (completed in 966 B.C.)

6. Queen of Sheba – “...behold, the half was not told me” (1 Kings 10:7)
7. Solomon turned from the Lord in later life, resulting in God’s judgment against the kingdom

1 Kings 11:1, 3-4 – “Now King Solomon loved many foreign women...He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. (4) For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father...(11) Therefore the Lord said to Solomon , ‘Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. (12) Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. (13) However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.’”

VI. Hebrew Poetry and Wisdom Literature

- A. During Solomon’s reign, the nation of Israel reached the height of her “golden age”
 1. The nation experienced a sudden rise in the standard of living
 2. Prosperity led to a flowering of Israelite culture
- B. Old Testament poetry books (the **Psalms** and **Song of Solomon**) and the majority of wisdom literature (**Proverbs**, **Ecclesiastes**) was written at this time (**Job** is dated to an earlier period [ca. 2000 B.C.])